

# Northeast Watercraft Accident Reconstruction Specialists

*Boat & PWC Accident Investigation*

Recreational boating “accidents” have continued to decline according to the most recent data published by the U.S. Coast Guard. Still, with over 5400 incidents, more than \$40 million in property damage, 703 fatalities and over 3800 injuries, watercraft accident investigation is not meeting the demand.

At-scene investigation is many times hampered with prolonged response times by investigators. This may be attributed to short staffing, even shorter budgets and a general lack of crash investigators. In some areas, Marine Patrol Officers wear many hats, enforcing fishing, hunting and shellfish laws in addition to boating laws. Many times key evidence is lost to the marine environment or simply overlooked by overworked or under trained officers.

In the aftermath of a collision, a need may be determined for further in-depth investigation. Many times the wrong type of expert is hired. Marine surveyors are commonly mistaken for Reconstructionists. The typical surveyor is perfect for system examinations or damage estimates but is insufficient when dealing with dynamics of a crash investigation and presenting it in a legal proceeding. Likewise, many blue water Captains have years of experience in large ocean going vessels but lack expertise in forensic crash investigation.

The Reconstructionist is able to show vessel dynamics in the pre-impact; impact and post-impact phases of the collision and demonstrate their relationship to each other. More importantly, the Reconstructionist will also look at the human element of the crash. More than half of the reported accidents analyzed by the Coast Guard were attributed to human factors such as operator inattention or inexperience. Crash Reconstructionists are trained to investigate the human factor as part of the crash analysis. Point of actual perception and point of possible perception, when determined, can demonstrate how and why a collision occurred. Occupant kinematics is another instance of how Reconstructionists can use pre-impact body position, mechanism of injury evidence and position of final rest to help establish the chain of events of the incident. The proper expert can make the difference. A Crash Reconstructionist can make the difference for you.

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